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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender, equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 56/132. It reviews steps taken by the General Assembly and its main committees during its fifty-sixth session to promote the achievement of the goal of gender equality through the gender mainstreaming strategy. Particular focus is placed on actions taken in relation to the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration and at major events during the past year, namely the International Conference on Financing for Development, the special session of the General Assembly on children and the Second World Assembly on Ageing. An assessment of the work of the Economic and Social Council is also provided. Finally, the report discusses the catalytic role of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat in support of mainstreaming gender perspectives into all policies and programmes of the United Nations.

* A/57/150.

** Submission of the report was delayed in order to reflect the results of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2002.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/132, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women on follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, with an assessment of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective with the United Nations system, including by providing information on key achievements, lessons learned and best practices, and to recommend further measures and strategies for future action within the United Nations system. In its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system, the Economic and Social Council clarified the concept of mainstreaming and the central principles associated with it, and addressed specific recommendations to all actors within the United Nations system. The Council encouraged the intergovernmental processes, including the General Assembly, to mainstream gender perspectives systematically into all areas of their work, such as macroeconomic questions, operational activities for development, poverty eradication, human rights, humanitarian assistance, budgeting, disarmament, peace and security, and legal and political matters.

2. Reports on the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women, focusing on measures taken within the United Nations system to strengthen gender mainstreaming (E/CN.6/2002/2), and to the Economic and Social Council, focusing on progress in gender mainstreaming in the work of the Council and its functional commissions (E/2002/66).

3. The present report reviews the steps taken by the General Assembly and its Main Committees during its fifty-sixth session, at major events during the past year, and by the Economic and Social Council to promote the achievement of the goal of gender equality through the gender mainstreaming strategy. The catalytic role of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat in support of mainstreaming gender perspectives is also assessed.

II. General Assembly

A. United Nations Millennium Declaration and the millennium development goals

4. The United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) reiterated gender equality both as a goal in itself and as a means to ensure the achievement of the goals of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those of the Millennium Declaration. The promotion of gender equality should be an integral part of all efforts to achieve the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly identify strategic objectives and actions which directly support the achievement of the goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration. Those two documents (together with other Conference outcomes) are instruments for targeted action at the national, regional and international levels, by all stakeholders, for the achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

5. The annex to the report of the Secretary-General on a road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration proposed 8 goals, 18 targets and over 40 indicators to help focus national and international priority-setting, facilitate monitoring of progress and harmonize reporting (see also General Assembly resolution 56/95; and A/57/270). Goal 3 recognizes the importance of gender equality and provides four indicators for tracking progress in achieving the goal, covering gender disparity in education (two indicators), women's access to employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sector and women's access to political decision-making. It should be emphasized, however, that those indicators alone cannot give a comprehensive picture of the extent to which gender equality is being realized. The goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women, as measured by the four above-mentioned indicators, should therefore be seen as indicative, providing one means of assessing progress. In order to achieve gender equality and the goals of the Millennium Declaration, gender perspectives need to be taken into account in the pursuit of all those goals, and should also be assessed in relation to each of them.

B. International Conference on Financing for Development

6. Steady progress has been made in recent years to clarify the gender perspectives of macroeconomic policy issues, including trade, finance and debt. Building on those insights, particular efforts were undertaken by many stakeholders to reflect gender perspectives in all matters dealt with by the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002 (see also sect. IV below).

7. The Monterrey Consensus adopted by the Conference pays attention to gender perspectives in several areas. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and a gender-sensitive approach are among the goals and aspects highlighted with regard to the mobilization of domestic resources for development, in particular in relation to policy and regulatory frameworks, basic economic and social infrastructure and microfinance. Governments recognized that microfinance for women's micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including in rural areas, were important for enhancing the social and economic impact of the financial sector. Governments noted the critical need to reinforce national capacity-building efforts in incorporating gender perspectives in national budgets. In relation to the mobilization of international resources, Governments urged the business sector to also take into account the gender implications of their undertakings. In addressing systemic issues, Governments agreed that in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the global economic system's support for development, gender perspectives had to be mainstreamed into development policies at all levels and in all sectors.

C. Special session on children

8. At its twenty-seventh special session, the General Assembly adopted a document entitled "A world fit for children", including a declaration and a plan of action. Among the principles and objectives of the declaration is a commitment to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against girls and boys, their access to and completion of primary education, and the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education.

9. Gender perspectives are highlighted in the plan of action. The plan emphasized the importance of women's full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, their empowerment to participate fully and equally in all spheres of society, and their protection and freedom from all forms of violence, abuse and discrimination, for the achievement of goals for children, particularly for girls. The plan also recognized the need to address the changing role of men in society, and addressed the shared responsibility of both parents in the raising of children. It covers women's important role in the goals, strategies and actions in relation to the promotion of healthy lives, quality education, protection against abuse, exploitation and violence, and the fight against HIV/AIDS. It makes a strong link between women's health and children's health; women's literacy and children's education; women's access to employment and income-generating opportunities and child labour. The plan also focuses on women in the context of combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its devastating effects.

10. Specific actions to promote healthy lives concern the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity; maternal tetanus; the improvement of maternal health-care services and the nutrition of mothers; and the preventable mortality of girl infants and children. In order to combat HIV/AIDS, the plan places emphasis on achieving a number of agreed goals and commitments, including to challenge gender stereotypes and attitudes and gender inequalities in relation to HIV/AIDS, and to encourage the active involvement of men and boys. The plan's strategies and actions consequently emphasize the need to address the gender dimensions of the epidemic. The role of men in society, as boys, adolescents and fathers, was also emphasized in the context of education.

11. The plan's recommended actions for providing quality education focus on eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, such as gender-sensitive innovative education programmes that address the enrolment, attendance and dropout of girls, including those in difficult circumstances. Adult literacy, especially for women, and the elimination of gender disparities in enrolment and gender-based bias and stereotypes in education systems, curricula and materials are also addressed.

12. In addressing the protection of children against abuse, exploitation and violence, actions focus on the

protection of women and children from abuse, exploitation and violence through ending harmful traditional or customary practices, such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and the protection of and assistance to refugees and internally displaced women and children. Other actions focus on assessing and monitoring the impact of sanctions on women and children with a view to alleviating their negative effects, and the protection of and provision for the special needs of girls in armed conflict. The plan also covers the needs of women and children who are victims of trafficking.

D. Second World Assembly on Ageing

13. Since the 1982 World Assembly on Ageing, research and awareness about the interaction of gender and ageing has been growing worldwide. At the Second World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, 8 to 12 April 2002), the gender aspects of ageing received broad attention. In the political declaration adopted by the Assembly, Governments reaffirmed their commitment to promote gender equality, and recognized the need to mainstream gender perspectives into all policies and programmes to take account of the needs and experiences of older women and men.

14. The Assembly stressed that recognizing the differential impact of ageing on women and men was integral to ensuring full equality between women and men, and to the development of effective measures to address that issue. The plan of action covers such areas as women's active participation in society and development; women's unpaid contributions to the community (care for family members, productive subsistence work, household maintenance and voluntary activities in the community); gender-sensitive policies aimed at reconciling work and care-giving responsibilities; women's equal participation in decision-making; women's participation in the labour market and related abilities to build pensions and other resources for their retirement and independence at an older age; older women in rural development; women's access to knowledge, education and training; feminization of poverty; income security and social protection and emergency situations; and women's access to information and communication technologies.

15. The Assembly recognized the particular vulnerability of women to disability at an older age due to, inter alia, gender differences in life expectancy and disease susceptibility, and gender inequalities over the life course. It called for the elimination of gender- and age-based social and economic inequalities in the provision of health-care services. In order to ensure an enabling and supportive environment, the Assembly emphasized women's role in the provision of informal care and the risk faced by older women of physical and psychological abuse. It also recognized that women, who provided most of the informal care, carried the cost in the form of both the financial penalty of low pension contributions, forgone promotions, lower incomes, and the physical and emotional cost of the stress resulting from balancing work and household obligations. That burden had grown because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In order to support women in that regard, Governments agreed that community-based care and support to families had to be provided, but also called for further information on how older women in caregiving could be assisted. Governments also decided to encourage the mass media to promote positive images of ageing, in particular of older women affected by misleading and negative stereotypes.

16. Finally, in the context of implementation and follow-up at national level, the plan of action called for national data collection and analysis, including gender- and age-specific information for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation, since research, including age and gender-sensitive data collection and analysis, provided essential evidence for effective policies.

E. General Assembly and its Main Committees

17. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted a number of resolutions that included attention to gender equality and/or gender perspectives, which are summarized below. While none of the Assembly's Main Committees reflected gender perspectives systematically in their outcomes, the Second and Third Committees paid the most attention to those issues. No reference was made to gender perspectives in the work of the Sixth Committee.

1. Resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee

18. In plenary session, the General Assembly included references to gender equality in a number of resolutions on cooperation between the United Nations and other international or regional organizations. The

Assembly noted the important contribution of women in the development process, and urged all Member States and the international community to contribute to the efforts of the Economic Community of Central African States to strengthen the role of women therein (see General Assembly resolution 56/39). It acknowledged the contribution of the Council of Europe to the promotion of gender equality (see General Assembly resolution 56/43). Concerning cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America and natural disasters, the Assembly recognized the extreme vulnerability of women and children who belonged to the poorest sectors of the population (see General Assembly resolution 56/105). The Assembly welcomed documents of the Ministerial Council Meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on promoting equal opportunities for women and men (see General Assembly resolution 56/216). With regard to cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Assembly recalled the Millennium Declaration and the resolve to strengthen cooperation in various fields, including gender issues (see General Assembly resolution 56/46). The Assembly noted with satisfaction the joint endeavours on women's issues of the International Olympic Committee and the United Nations system (see General Assembly resolution 56/75).

19. Also in plenary session, the General Assembly adopted a number of resolutions referring to gender equality and/or gender perspectives in relation to humanitarian and other assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, East Timor and Afghanistan. The Assembly welcomed the continued and increased efforts by the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to ensure that gender perspectives were mainstreamed in the reconstruction agenda of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Assembly also expressed its grave concern at the deteriorating economic, social and humanitarian situation in the country and its effects on women and children, and drew attention to the increasing number of women and girls infected by HIV/AIDS (see General Assembly resolution 56/100). The Assembly called upon relevant bodies to provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the humanitarian needs of the affected population of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, bearing in mind the special situation of women (see General Assembly resolution 56/101). In reference to the assistance for East Timor, the Assembly urged continued efforts aimed at the enhanced ownership and participation of women in the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of the country (see General Assembly resolution 56/104). With regard to Afghanistan, the Assembly considered that only a political settlement aimed at the establishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government could lead to durable peace and reconciliation. It appealed to all States and the international community to ensure that all humanitarian assistance and future rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes integrate a gender perspective and actively attempt to promote the participation of both women and men, and also to ensure that women benefited equally with men from those programmes (see General Assembly resolution 56/220).

20. As to the global agenda for dialogue among civilizations, the Assembly recognized that tolerance and respect for diversity effectively promoted and were supported by, inter alia, the empowerment of women (see General Assembly resolution 56/6). The Assembly encouraged Governments, relevant United Nations bodies and other donors to take further action to promote gender-appropriate mine-awareness programmes, victim assistance and child-centred rehabilitation. It reiterated its dismay at the high number of victims of mines, especially among civilian populations, including women and children, and invited Member States to develop and support national programmes to promote awareness of landmines, especially among women and children (see General Assembly resolution 56/219).

2. First Committee: disarmament and international security issues

21. In the context of regional confidence-building measures, in particular activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the Assembly welcomed a decision to organize a subregional conference on the protection of women and children in armed conflict, and requested the Secretary-General to lend all the necessary support for the holding of such a conference (see General Assembly resolution 56/25 A).

3. Second Committee: economic and financial issues

22. The Second Committee addressed the situation of women under its regular biennial item on women in development. In addition, it paid attention to gender equality and/or gender perspectives in relation to industrial development cooperation and human resources development. Gender issues were also noted in the context of the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and of operational activities for development.

23. The Secretary-General's report submitted under the sub-item on women in development (A/56/321 and Corr.1) focused on gender perspectives in access to financial resources. The Assembly recognized the key role women played in the economy and gender equality as fundamental for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and noted the multiplier effects of investing in the development of women and girls, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth (see General Assembly resolution 56/188). The Assembly also recognized the importance of industrialization as a key element in promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa and its role in facilitating efforts to eradicate poverty, inter alia, through gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women. It called for particular attention to enterprises owned by women and to women entrepreneurs (see General Assembly resolution 56/187).

24. In the context of human resources development, the Assembly recognized the need to integrate human resources development into comprehensive strategies that mainstream gender perspectives. Empowerment of women was considered essential for enhancing human capacity in meeting the challenge of development. The Assembly encouraged the United Nations system to focus, in its cooperation activities, on building human and institutional capacity, with specific attention given to women, girls and vulnerable groups (see General Assembly resolution 56/189).

25. The Assembly expressed its deep concern at the increasing number of women living in extreme poverty, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries. In addressing the causes of poverty, the Assembly highlighted the need to empower women, and invited all Governments and the United Nations system to promote an active and visible policy of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes aiming at eradicating poverty. It encouraged the use of gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into planning the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes, and emphasized the role of microcredit as an important anti-poverty tool, promoting production and self-employment and empowering women living in poverty. It noted the critical role of formal and non-formal education, in particular for girls, in empowering those living in poverty (see General Assembly resolution 56/207).

26. In its resolution (see General Assembly resolution 56/201) on the triennial policy review of operational activities, the Assembly welcomed efforts to improve the gender balance in the resident coordinator system. One of the resolution's sections dealt with gender, welcoming progress achieved in gender mainstreaming in operational activities and encouraging further work in the area of equitable access to financial and productive resources to ensure a reversal in the feminization of poverty. It also encouraged continuing efforts to improve gender balance, called for renewed and accelerated efforts in gender mainstreaming in the framework of the operational activities for development, in particular in support of poverty eradication, and encouraged the empowerment of women as a priority for operational activities for development.

4. Third Committee: social, humanitarian and cultural issues

27. Two items of the Third Committee — advancement of women and follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women — are specifically devoted to gender equality. Under those items, the Assembly adopted resolutions on the situation of older women in society (see General Assembly resolution 56/126); traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls (see General Assembly resolution 56/128); improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (see General Assembly resolution 56/129); and violence against women migrant workers (see General Assembly resolution 56/131); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (see General Assembly resolution 56/229); the critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (see General Assembly

resolution 56/125); the United Nations Development Fund for Women (see General Assembly resolution 56/130); and the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system (see General Assembly resolution 56/127). The Assembly also adopted a resolution on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (see General Assembly resolution 56/132).

28. Attention to gender equality and/or gender perspectives was included in the agenda items on social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family; human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives. References were also made to gender perspectives in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice; international drug control; questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions; the promotion and protection of the rights of children; and the implementation of human rights instruments.

29. In the context of social development, the General Assembly emphasized that equality between women and men and respect for the human rights of all family members were essential to family well-being and society at large (see General Assembly resolution 56/113). The Assembly recognized that cooperatives promoted the fullest possible participation in the economic and social development of women, and were becoming a major factor of economic and social development (see General Assembly resolution 56/114). The Assembly urged Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide special protection to girls and women with disabilities with the aim of integrating them into society and protecting and promoting their human rights (see General Assembly resolution 56/115). It requested all Governments to redouble their efforts and set firm targets and timetables, including gender-specific education targets and programmes, to eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education, to combat female illiteracy and to ensure their equal access to education by working in active partnership with communities, associations, the media and development agencies (see General Assembly resolution 56/116). The importance of female schooling and education, in particular for girls and young women, was highlighted in the context of involving youth in policies and programmes (see General Assembly resolution 56/117). In the context of the promotion and protection of the rights of children, the Assembly adopted a resolution on the girl child (see General Assembly resolution 56/139).

30. The Assembly expressed its desire of closer coordination and cooperation among States in combating smuggling of migrant women and trafficking in women in the context of crime prevention and criminal justice and international drug control (see General Assembly resolution 56/123). It called for women's and men's equal benefits from strategies directed against the world drug problem, through their involvement in all stages of programme and policy-making (see General Assembly resolution 56/124). In the plan of action for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice, the Assembly paid attention to women as victims of trafficking in persons, and recommended that the Centre for International Crime Prevention take into account measures for the assistance and support of victims and witnesses, including women, in its projects and programmes. In promoting safe and effective alternatives to incarceration, the Assembly called on both national and international actors to ensure that such actions addressed any disparate impact on women and men. A separate section of the action plan was devoted to actions on the special needs of women in the criminal justice system. It highlighted in particular the need for criminal justice strategies to take into account the special needs of women as criminal justice practitioners, victims and witnesses, and also as offenders and prisoners. The Assembly called on States to modify their legislation, policies, procedures and practices accordingly. Actions at the international level focused primarily on violence against women and gender bias in the administration of criminal justice (see General Assembly resolution 56/261).

31. The Assembly welcomed the decision of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to mainstream a gender perspective into its activities and requested its Secretariat to integrate a gender perspective into all activities (see General Assembly resolution 56/123). It called on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to continue mainstreaming a gender

perspective into all its policies, programmes and activities, and requested its secretariat to continue integrating a gender perspective into all documentation prepared for the Commission (see General Assembly resolution 56/124).

32. The situation of women migrants and refugees, as well as of internally displaced women, was addressed in relation to refugee issues and human rights questions. The Assembly was aware that the majority of refugees were women and children (see General Assembly resolution 56/136) and was deeply disturbed by their suffering in this regard (see General Assembly resolution 56/166), in particular as they constituted the majority of those affected by conflict, bearing the brunt of atrocities and other consequences of conflict (see General Assembly resolution 56/135). It called for a focused and consistent approach towards migrants as a specific vulnerable group, in particular migrant women and children (see General Assembly resolution 56/170). The Assembly welcomed the specific attention paid by the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons to the special protection, assistance and development needs of internally displaced women (see General Assembly resolution 56/164).

33. In the context of implementing human rights instruments, the General Assembly invited the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to continue to examine those issues with a specific emphasis on women, and to exchange views with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences (see General Assembly resolution 56/143).

34. In addressing human rights questions, the General Assembly urged States parties to make use of sex-disaggregated data in preparing their reports under the International Covenants on Human Rights, and stressed the importance of taking fully into account a gender perspective in the implementation of the Covenants (see General Assembly resolution 56/144). It rejected unilateral coercive measures, with all their extraterritorial effects, as tools for political and economic pressure against any country because of their negative effects on the realization of all the human rights of women, children and the elderly (see General Assembly resolution 56/148). It considered the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women to be an effective means to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development, with measures including property rights for women and their access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit (see General Assembly resolution 56/150). The Assembly noted that most of the people without enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs were women, which infringed upon women's fundamental human rights. The Assembly encouraged the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to mainstream a gender perspective (see General Assembly resolution 56/155). The Assembly emphasized that tolerance and respect for diversity facilitated the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including gender equality (see General Assembly resolution 56/156). The General Assembly urged States to devote particular attention to practices, which violate the human rights of women and discriminate against women in combating all forms of religious intolerance (see General Assembly resolution 56/157).

35. The Assembly emphasized that human rights education constituted an important vehicle for the elimination of gender-based discrimination and for ensuring equal opportunities through the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, and encouraged Governments to undertake gender-sensitive training of trainers (see General Assembly resolution 56/167). It also invited Governments to provide gender-sensitive training in human rights in the administration of justice to all judges, prosecutors, social workers, immigration and police officers and other professionals concerned (see General Assembly resolution 56/161). The Assembly called upon States to pay special attention to the promotion and protection of the human rights of girls and boys belonging to minorities (see General Assembly resolution 56/162) and to integrate a gender perspective in the process of the realization of the right to development of minorities and vulnerable groups (see General Assembly resolution 56/150).

36. The General Assembly adopted four country-specific resolutions that also addressed the situation of women's human rights in those countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the Assembly condemned the numerous instances of rape and sexual violence against women and children and requested the Special Rapporteur to incorporate a gender perspective into his/her work (see General Assembly resolution 56/173), and Iraq, where it

emphasized the adverse effects of sanctions on the daily life of women and children (see General Assembly resolution 56/174). It deplored the continued violation of women's rights in Myanmar, in particular forced labour, trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation, including rape. The Assembly urged the Government to implement fully the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in particular the request to prosecute and punish those who violate the human rights of women, and to carry out human rights education and gender-sensitization training, in particular for military personnel (see General Assembly resolution 56/231). In a resolution on the questions of human rights in Afghanistan, the Assembly paid extensive attention to and condemned the gross violations of women's and girls' rights (see General Assembly resolution 56/176).

5. Fourth Committee: special political and decolonization issues

37. The Fourth Committee referred to women's issues in a resolution on questions relating to information, reaffirming that United Nations information centres should continue to publicize United Nations activities and accomplishments in areas, including on women's rights (see General Assembly resolution 56/64 B).

6. Fifth Committee: administrative and budgetary issues

38. In the context of the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to develop a coherent policy on gender mainstreaming in all of the Organization's peacekeeping activities and to submit, if necessary, a request on this issue in the light of that policy (see General Assembly resolution 56/293).

III. Economic and Social Council

39. The work of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001 was covered in the report of the Secretary-General to the Council (E/2002/66). The establishment of a new regular sub-item entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system" is expected to strengthen the Council's capacity to monitor and evaluate achievements made and obstacles encountered in gender mainstreaming in its own work and that of its subsidiary bodies. The Council also decided to undertake, in a coordination segment before 2005, a review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 (see Council resolution 2001/41).

40. Further to that resolution and in preparation for the consideration of the item during the Council's substantive session of 2002, a panel discussion on gender mainstreaming in the functional commissions of the Council was held on 11 June 2002 (see also sect. IV below). The panel was chaired by a Vice-President of the Council and moderated by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat. It consisted of Chairpersons/Vice-Chairpersons of three functional commissions and the heads of their respective secretariats, namely the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the United Nations Forum on Forests. The panel provided an opportunity to draw attention to efforts already undertaken in the functional commissions to incorporate gender perspectives, discuss constraints to gender mainstreaming and identify areas for future action.

41. Panellists gave examples of progress, gaps and challenges, including lack of gender awareness and expertise in functional commissions and their secretariats; lack of data disaggregated by sex; insufficient monitoring of gender mainstreaming by the functional commissions and by the Economic and Social Council; and inadequate attention to gender perspectives in policy formation. A number of recommendations were put forward, including regular reporting by functional commissions to the Council on progress and challenges in gender mainstreaming; regular briefings on gender mainstreaming by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Division for the Advancement of Women; explicit attention to gender mainstreaming at joint bureaux meetings; and appointment of bureau members of commissions to serve as focal points for gender mainstreaming. Additional competence development for Secretariat staff was also recommended.

42. The Commission on the Status of Women contributed a conference room paper to the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2002 of the Council on the contribution of human resources

development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development, in order to support the reflection of gender perspectives in the Council's work (see also sect. IV below).

43. The ministerial declaration adopted by the Council at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2002 recognized gender equality as one of the mutually reinforcing essential elements for progress in health and education. It stressed the need for gender mainstreaming in all human resources development policies and programmes, including in their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation so as to be able to effectively address gender inequalities. The declaration noted full and equal access to health care and education as fundamental for the achievement of gender equality. It called for increased attention to maternal and child health and reproductive health, and an integrated approach to education that included girls' education.

IV. Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat

44. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women has continued to promote, facilitate and monitor gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system. Competence development programmes on gender mainstreaming, based on the framework developed by the Office of the Special Adviser, were initiated in 2001 in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and in the United Nations Office at Vienna. The Office of the Special Adviser produced a strategy overview on gender mainstreaming focusing on the work of the Secretariat. Briefing notes on gender perspectives on crime prevention and drug control were developed, in collaboration with the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the United Nations Secretariat. Support for the incorporation of gender perspectives in the fellowship programme of the Department of Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat continued.

45. The Special Adviser played a key role in advocacy efforts to ensure attention to the situation of women in the development of a strategic recovery plan for Afghanistan. Specific advocacy-related activities included a series of panel discussions organized in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities; a focus on Afghan women in the celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March 2002, organized in collaboration with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat and an inter-agency task force; and a briefing of the Security Council by Sima Samar, Minister of Women's Affairs, in April 2002. Work accomplished in this area also included reporting to the Commission on the Status of Women and the provision of practical advice to United Nations entities on gender and human rights dimensions of emergency and humanitarian assistance. The Special Adviser participated in the Executive Committees on Peace and Security; Economic and Social Affairs; and Humanitarian Affairs, and the Division for the Advancement of Women was represented in the ECHA/United Nations Development Group Subgroup on Gender. The Division for the Advancement of Women provided a gender specialist to the Integrated Mission Task Force in 2001, and a staff member from the Division is currently detailed to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan to act as Interim Gender Adviser to the Special Representative. The Gender Adviser also works closely with other United Nations agencies and with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to enhance the incorporation of gender perspectives in development programmes in Afghanistan.

46. In December 2001, the first regional symposium on gender mainstreaming was organized by the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The meeting brought together 80 representatives of Governments, regional-level intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups, the private sector, academia and United Nations entities for a constructive dialogue on gender mainstreaming in the region. The discussions focused on identifying entry points, approaches, methodologies and tools to support gender mainstreaming at the local, national, subregional and regional levels. Potentials, good practice examples and remaining challenges were also identified.

47. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, chaired by the Special Adviser,

continued to play a critical role in supporting the implementation of gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system. Task forces focused on promoting and facilitating the integration of gender perspectives in programme budgets, the common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and follow-up to the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Work continued on the development of indicators to measure gender mainstreaming, as well as in preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society (see also E/2002/66). Task managers included the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

48. The task force on women, peace and security, chaired by the Special Adviser, continued to support the incorporation of gender perspectives in all areas of the work of the United Nations on peace and security. On 31 October 2001, the task force organized a panel to discuss United Nations initiatives to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), with participation of the President of the Security Council, the heads of the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Political Affairs and Disarmament Affairs, and of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, and moderated by the Special Adviser. To facilitate the preparation of the Secretary-General's study on women, peace and security and secure the views of members of the Security Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, other interested Member States, United Nations entities and civil society, two brainstorming sessions were held in December 2001 and March 2002.

49. Continued efforts were made to ensure that gender perspectives were identified and addressed in the preparation for global conferences and summits. Inputs by Member States, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women/Division for the Advancement of Women as task manager, and other stakeholders, resulted in unprecedented attention to gender perspectives in the framework of the International Conference on Financing for Development, and in a reaffirmation of gender equality as essential for achieving the goals of the Conference. Inputs included presentations by the Special Adviser in plenary sessions of the preparatory committees, the organization of panels and the development of analyses of critical gender perspectives in relation to the key areas on the financing for development agenda. A day of dialogue on gender and financing for development was organized by the task force in February 2002 to provide an opportunity for Member States, the United Nations, NGOs and civil society groups, the private sector and research institutes to deepen the understanding of gender perspectives in all the issues taken up in the international conference and identify what needed to be done to ensure adequate attention to gender perspectives in all follow-up. A report was prepared on the findings and recommendations from the day of dialogue and made available at the International Conference in Monterrey.

50. A supporting [illegible] to the twenty-seventh special session of the Ge[illegible] Assembly on children, in the form of a panel discussion, was organized by the Office of the Special Adviser and held on 10 May 2002. The panel underlined the importance of the international rule of law and gave concrete examples of its application at the national level for advancing the enjoyment of human rights of women and children, and highlighted the complementary application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and their optional protocols.

51. The Special Adviser also provided support to the preparations for the substantive session of 2002 of the Economic and Social Council, including participation in round tables on health and education in relation to human resources development, which were held on 5 and 14 February 2002, respectively, and co-chairing a ministerial breakfast round table on gender mainstreaming in these areas on 2 July. The Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women, in cooperation with the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, organized a panel discussion on gender mainstreaming in the functional commissions, at which the Special Adviser gave an opening statement (see paras. 40 and 41 above). In order to encourage attention to gender perspectives in the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society, the Special Adviser submitted a statement to the

preparatory committee at the first session, which took place from 1 to 5 July 2002 in Geneva.

V. Recommendations

52. The recommendations set out below are presented to the Assembly for its consideration.

53. **The General Assembly may wish to take specific steps to ensure that gender perspectives are an integral part of all aspects of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and of the follow-up to United Nations conferences and special sessions reviewed in the present report. The Assembly may also wish to request the Secretary-General to ensure that annual and quinquennial follow-up reports to the Millennium Declaration assess progress in promoting the gender equality goal, as well as gender equality in relation to other development goals of the Declaration. To that end, the measurement and coverage of indicators should be improved so that progress can be monitored over time. The Assembly may further wish to call for increased attention to gender perspectives in the follow-up to and reporting on the Monterrey Consensus, as well as in the work of the Second Committee. It may also wish to encourage systematic attention to gender perspectives in the preparatory process for and outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society.**

54. **The Assembly could also reiterate its commitment to more consistent attention to gender perspectives in all areas of its work, building on the progress achieved and insights gained in the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery. In the light of the emphasis on gender perspectives contained in the Millennium Declaration and in order to support gender-sensitive policy formulation, the Assembly could call on the Secretary-General to integrate gender perspectives in reporting to the Assembly. Reports could indicate challenges to gender mainstreaming, such as lack of capacity and lack of data disaggregated on the basis of sex and other gender-specific information, and provide proposals as to how these challenges could be overcome.**